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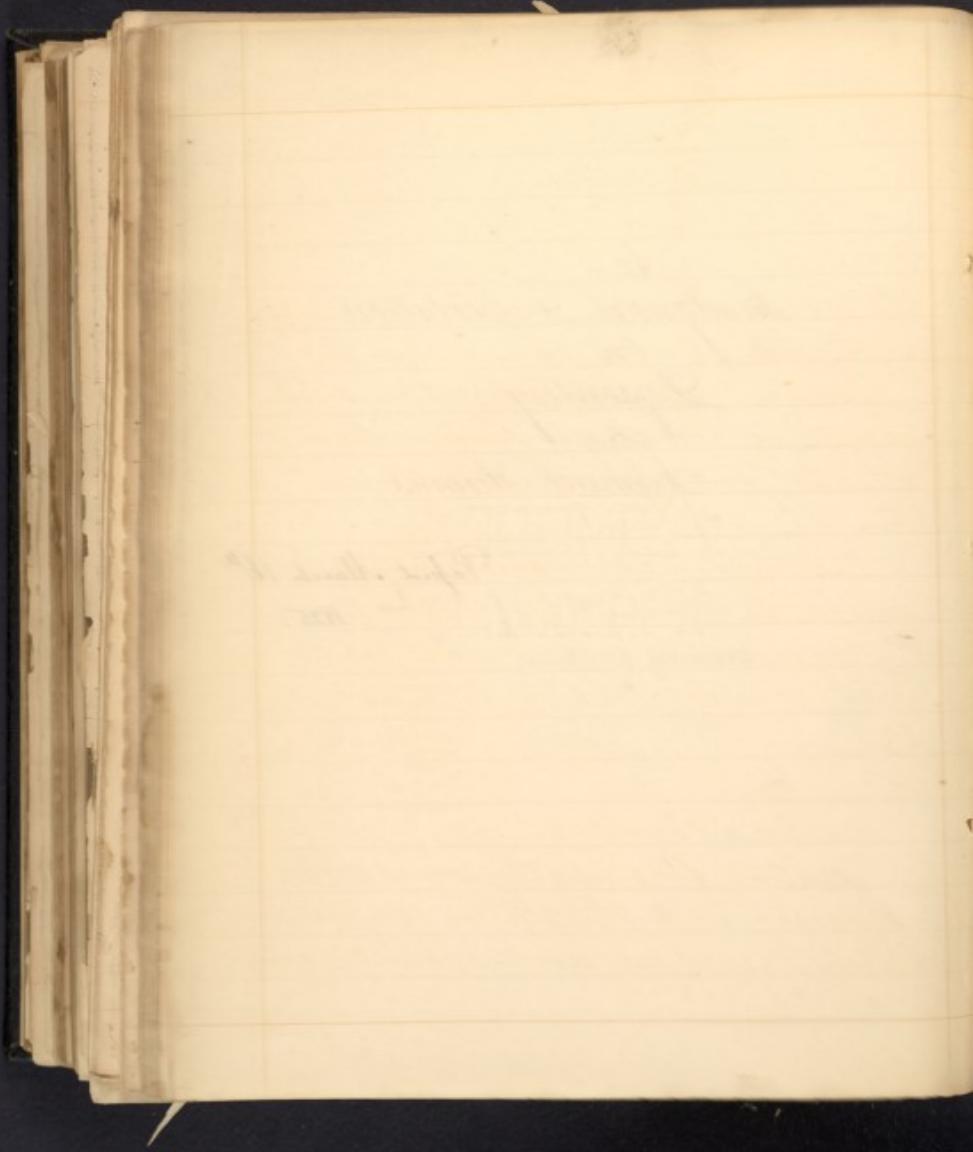
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An
Inaugural Dissertation
on
Dysentery
by
Samuel Thomas.

Published March 16th
1825.

correctly written.



Dysentery

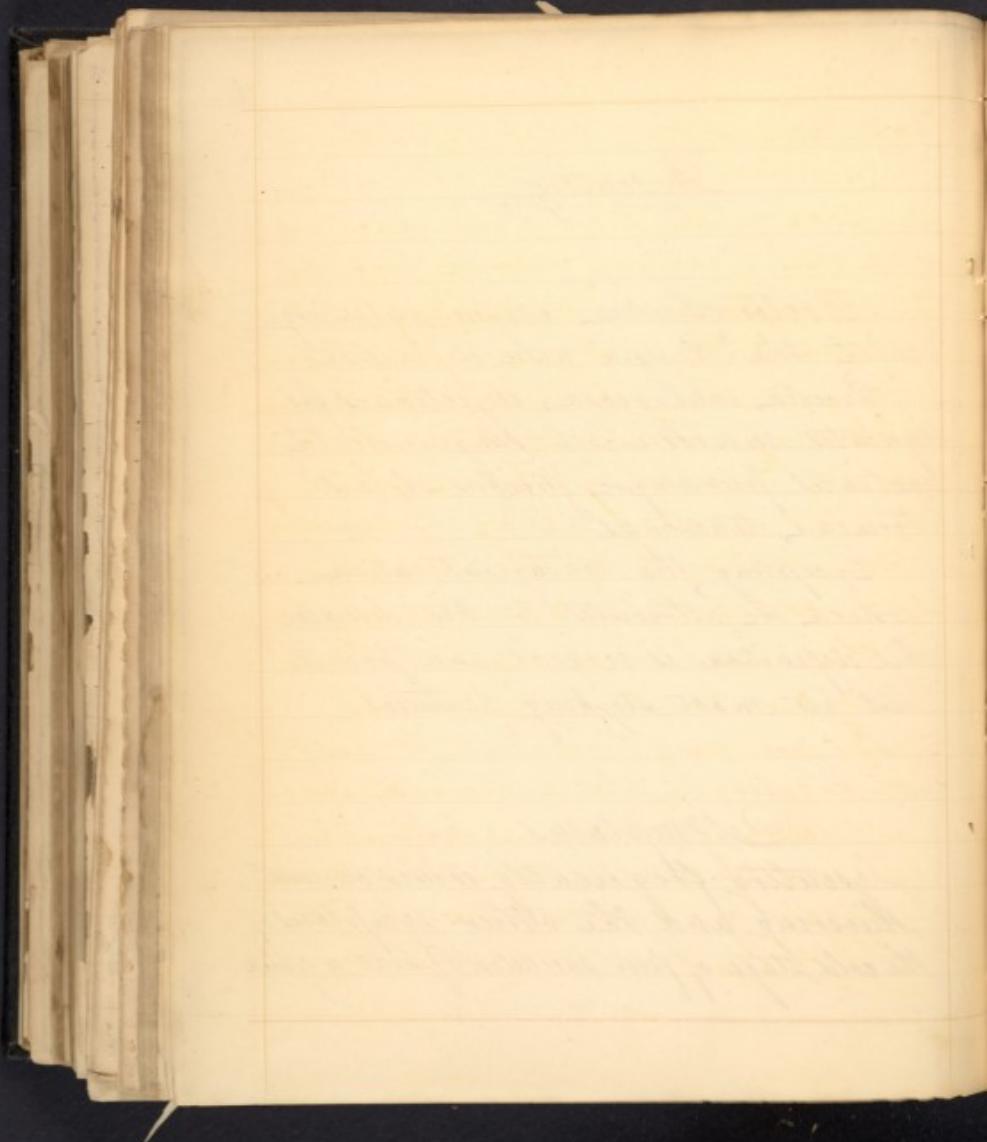
Doctor Cullen classed Dysentery,
with the "Poxpia" and defines it.

"Poxpia contagiosa; dejections fre-
quentes, mucosae vel sanguinolentae,
petenti plerumque facibus alviis.
terminus, tetanus."

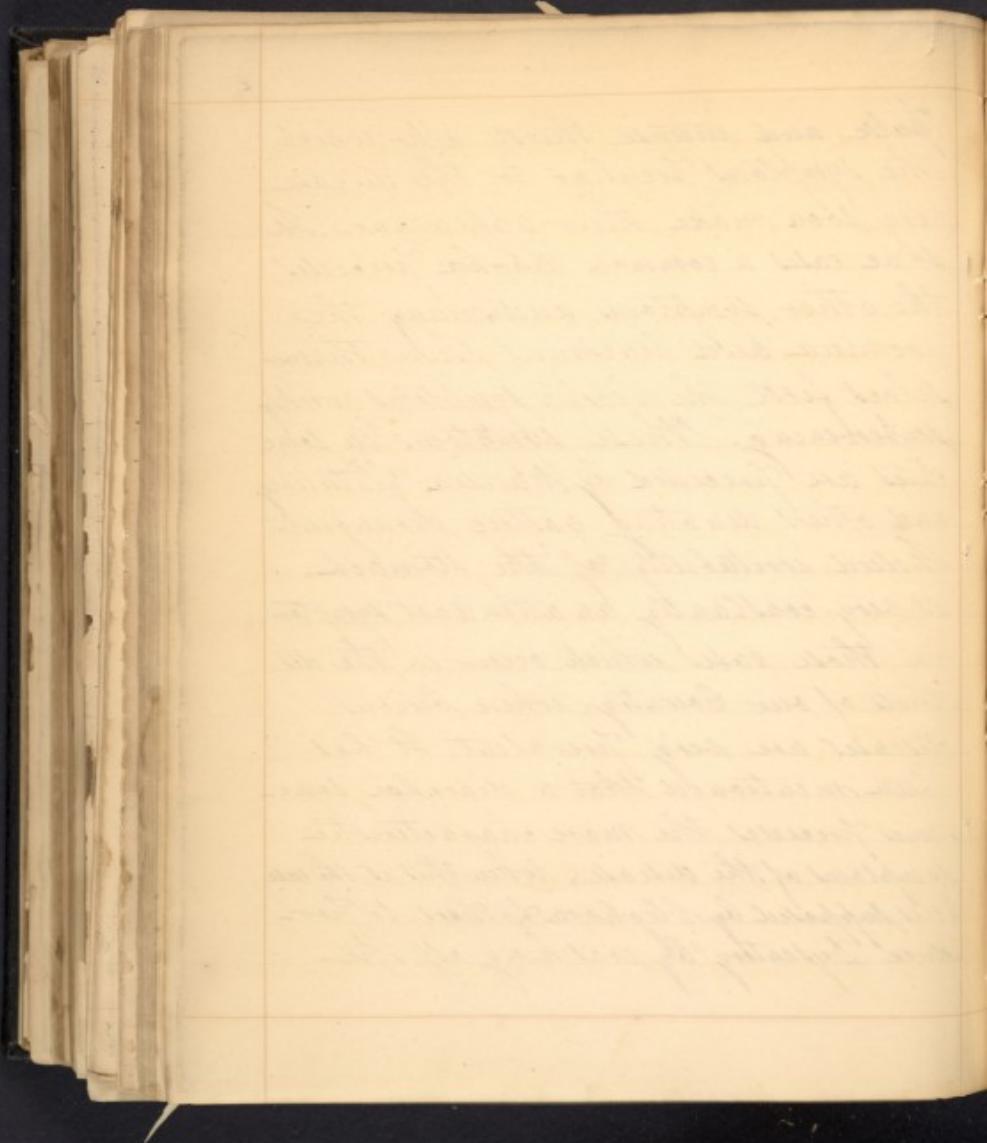
Excepting the contagious nature
which he attributes to the disease
his definition is correct, and points
out its most striking features.

Symptoms

Dysentery frequently comes on with
shivering, and the other symptoms of
the cold stage of fever succeeded by heat, a quick



pulse, and intense thirst, after which
the symptoms peculiar to the disease
very soon make their appearance. In
some cases a common diarrhea precedes
the other symptoms, and in many the
toxina and trachus show them-
selves first, the febrile symptoms quickly
superposing. These symptoms in some
cases are preceded by nausea, flatulence
and others denoting gastric derangement.
Indeed, irritability of the stomach
is very constantly an attendant symptom
in those cases which occur in the dis-
tricts of our Country, where bilious
diseases are very prevalent. It has
been mentioned that a diarrhea, some-
times precedes the more characteristic
symptoms of the disease, when this is the case
it is supposed by Blegkora & others to pro-
duce "Dysentery" by washing off the

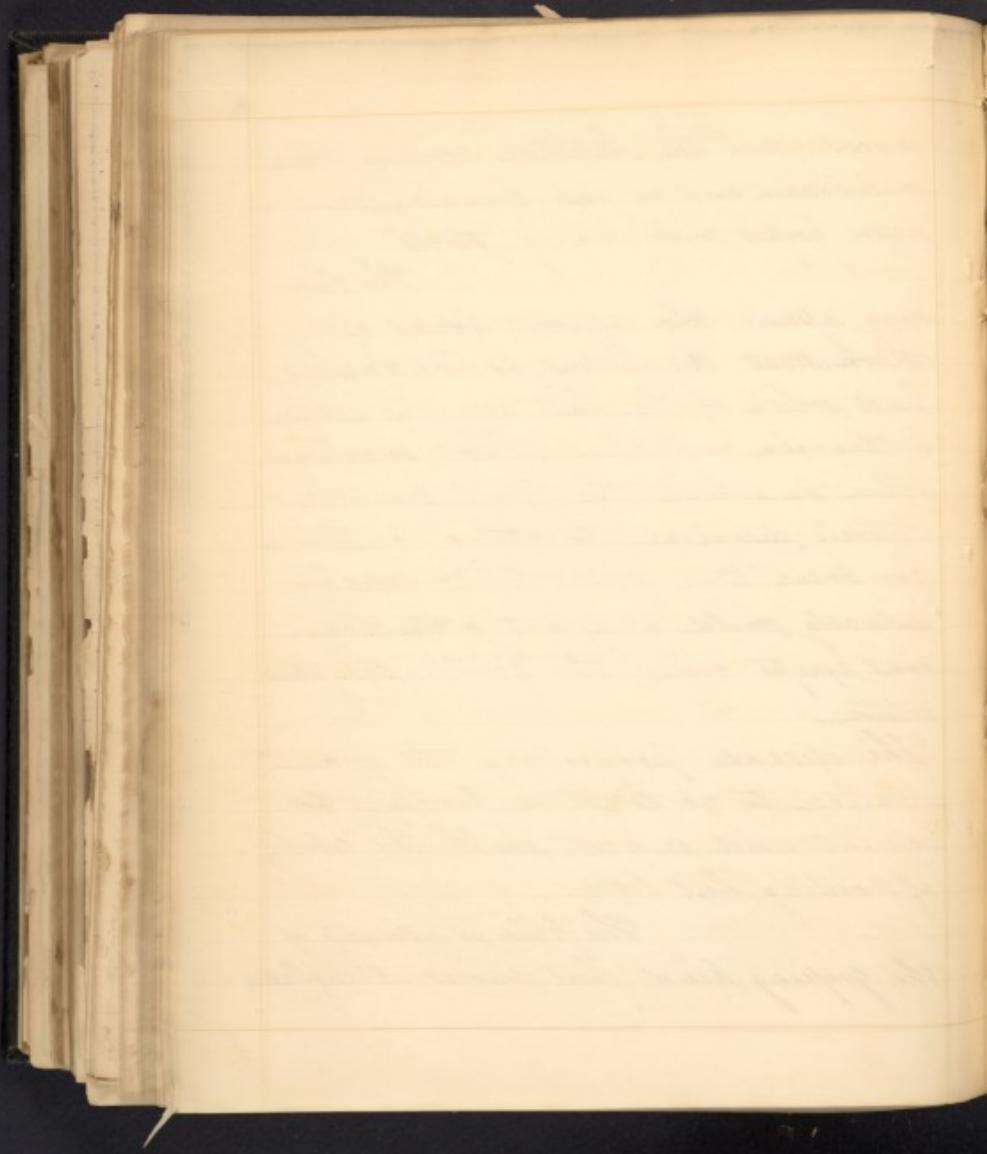


mucus from the intestines corroding their membranes, and at last bringing on severe gripes with bloody stools.

The fever may assume the different forms of Alectericat, Remittent, or Continual, and when of the last may be either a Typhoch or Typhus. Cases sometimes occur in which the febrile symptoms entirely disappear, the others continuing for some time after; these cases are usually mild, and not often dangerous except when the febrile symptoms return.

The disease progressing, the inclination to go to stool becomes frequent and urgent, with the ability of voiding but little.

The pain is usually of the gripping kind, but varies at different



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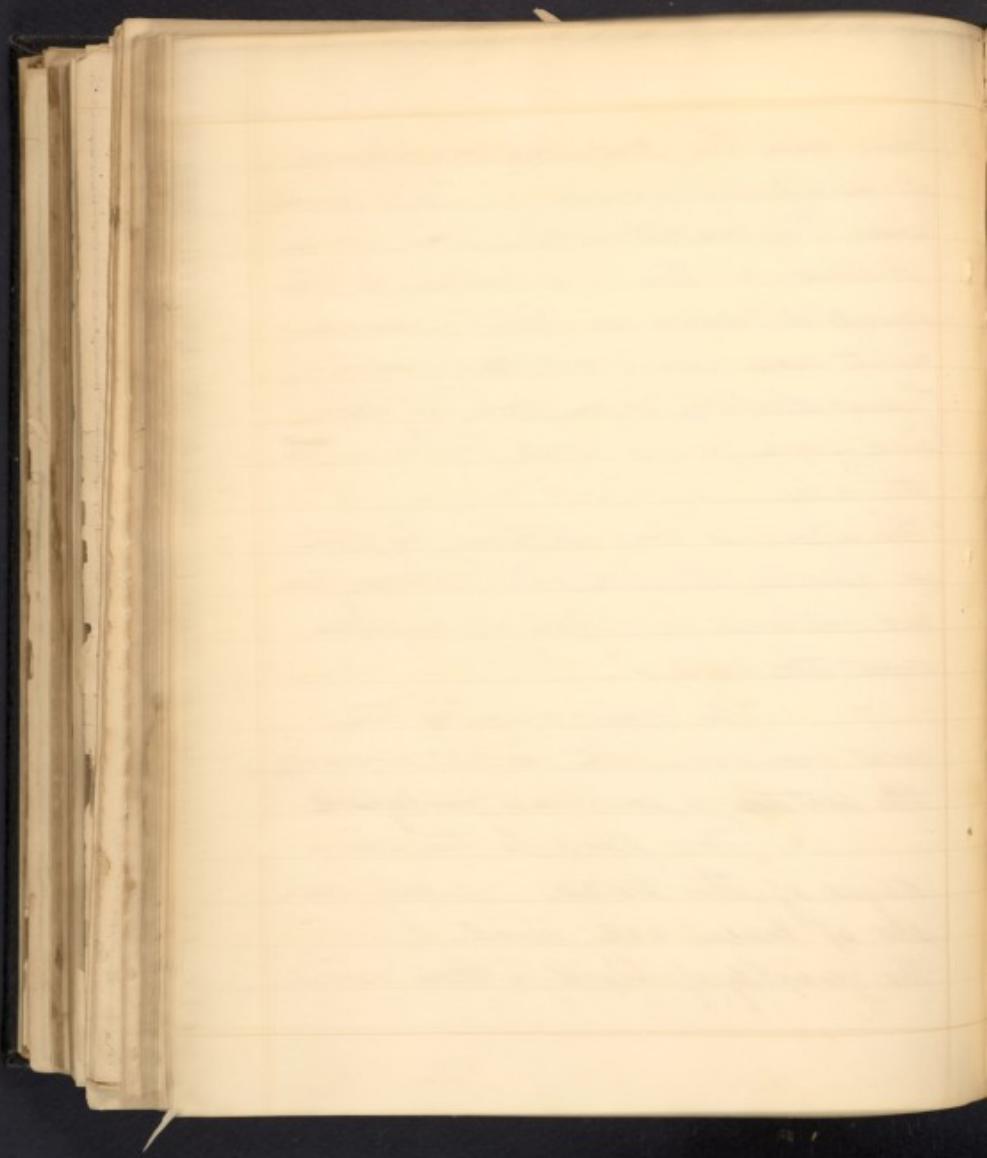
times, and the sensations complained
of by different patients often differ much.
Some, Clegg however, are said with
twisting of the guts which (as they
express it) draws up their bowels into
knots, and many instead of grasping
twins shifting from place to place
have fixed ones in some particular ^{part} of
the belly.

The efforts to void any thing by stool
are usually attended with extreme pain
and followed by a painful sensation
about the anus.

The consequence of the
great irritation, and violent straining,
the rectum is sometimes prolapsed.

The stools in the early
stages of the disease, usually con-
sist of mucus and blood.

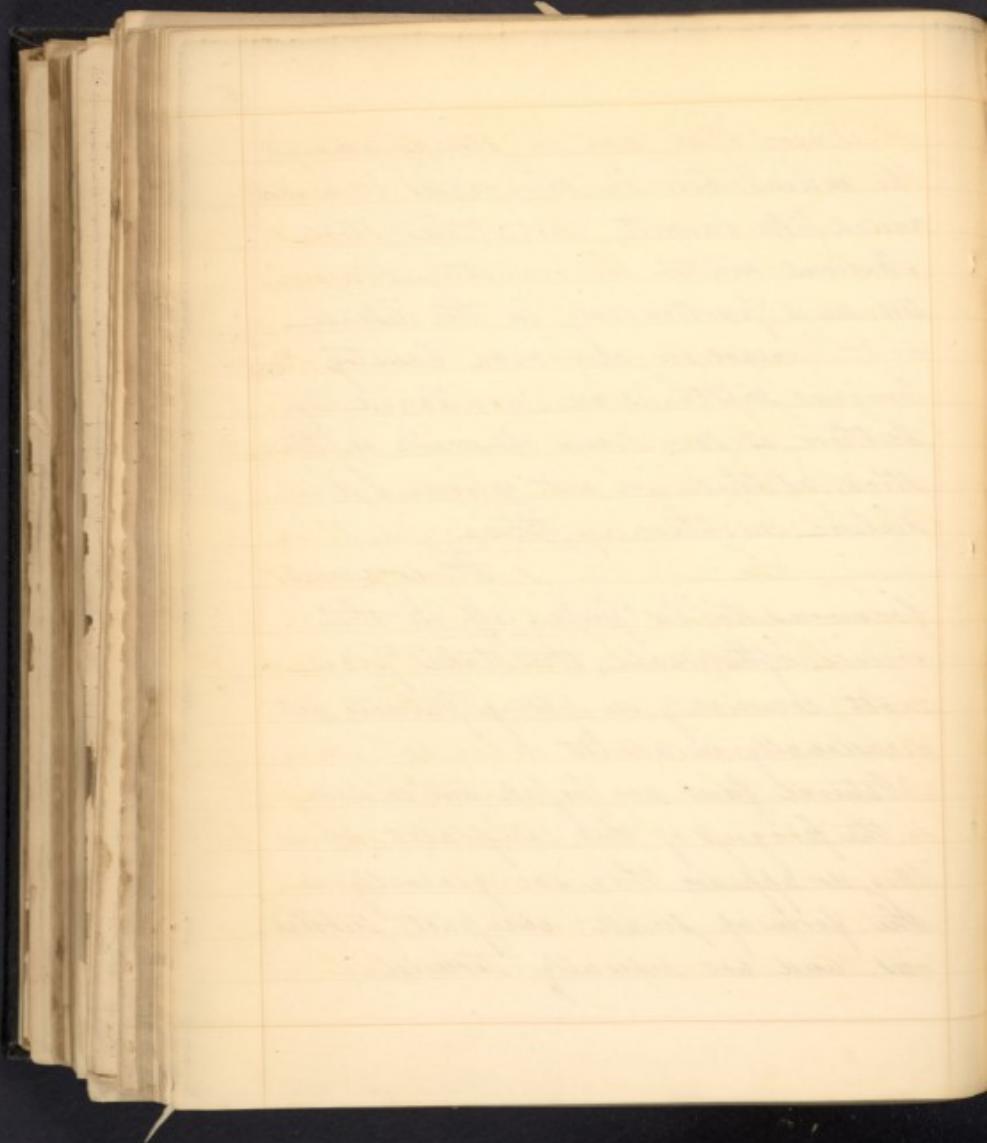
The quantity of blood, in them varies.



it is very often seen in streaks amongst
the mucus, but in some cases it makes
much the largest part of the stool.
Bilious matter is frequently excre-
ted, and particularly in the disease
as it appears in other clima country
various substances are mentioned by
authors as sometimes observable in the
stools, as these are not common, I shall
desire mentioning them.

It is usual
for worms to be passed off in the
course of the disease, this takes place
most commonly in young patients, but
occasionally in adults.

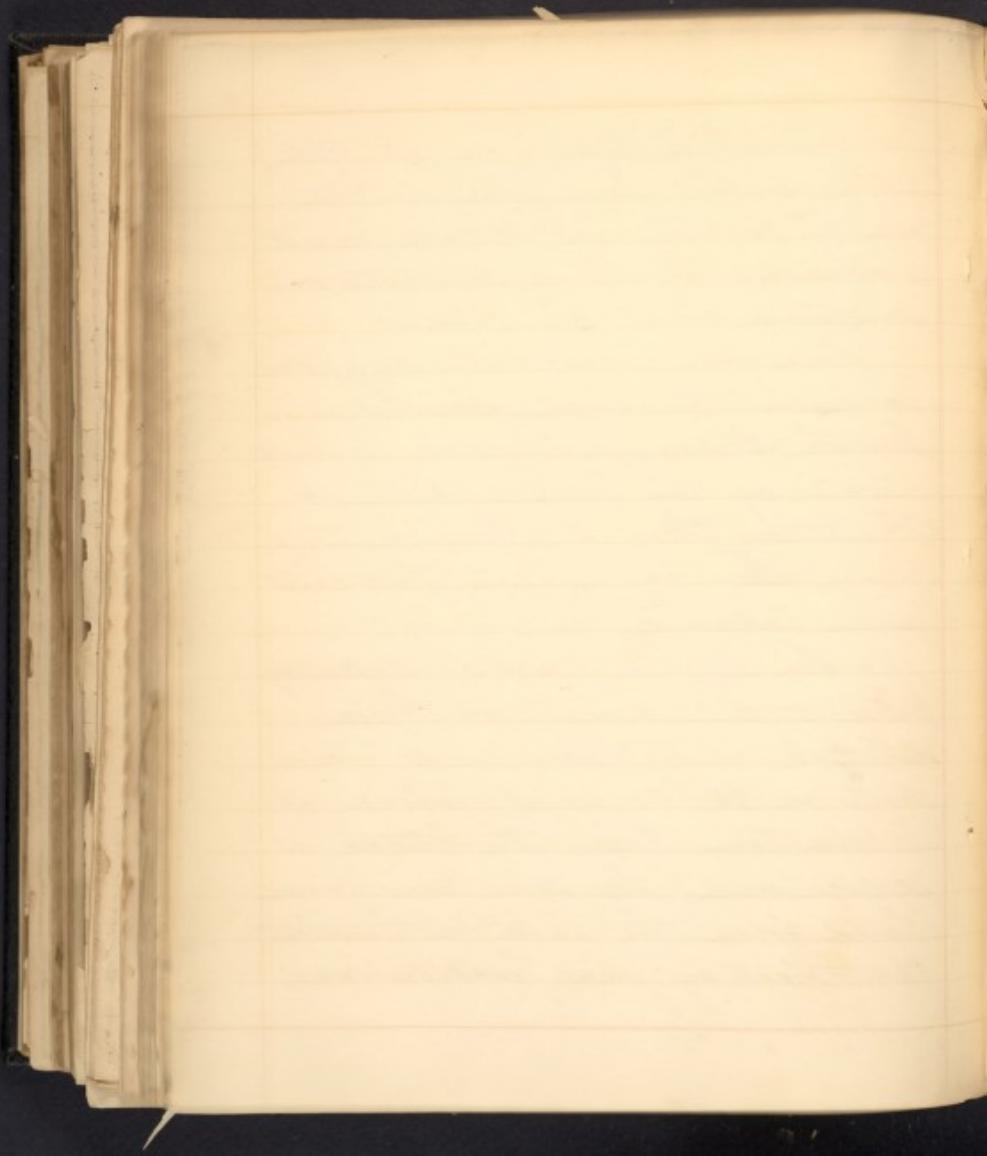
Natural feces are passed but seldom
in the progress of this complaint, when
they do appear, they are generally in
the form of small compact substanc-
es, and are usually termed



forbida. The expulsion of these either spontaneously or by the aid of medicine is attended with a remission of the most distressing symptoms.

The various functional maladies undergo nearly the same change as in simple fever, except where influenced directly by the local affection. Ordinarily there is a painful trangression, the appetite is in most cases much impaired.

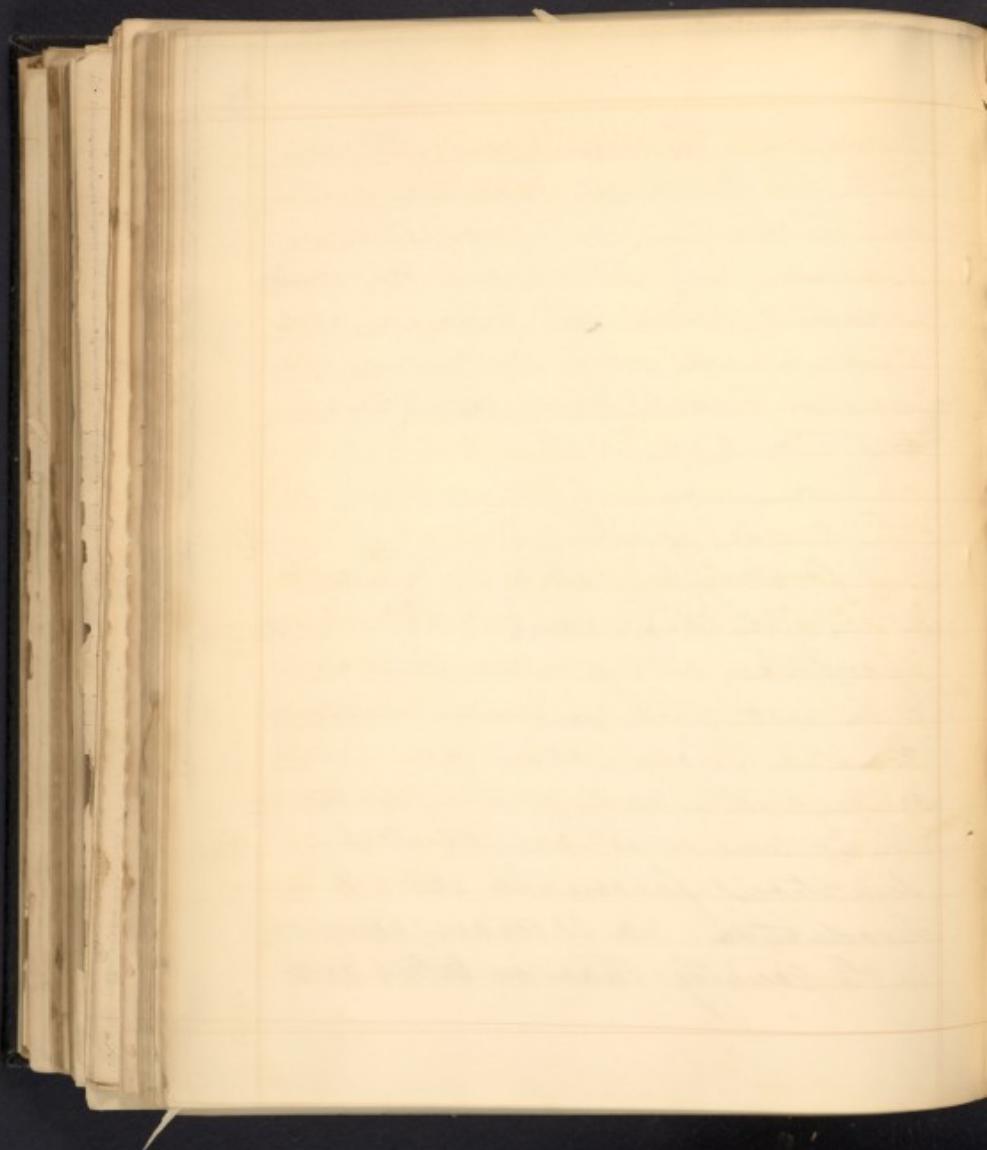
The different cases of Dysentery exhibit great variety in their duration, and that depends principally on the degree of violence of the complaints. When the attack is sudore, and the symptoms aggravated from the first, with violent excitement or great prostration,



occurs &c, the disease may prove fatal in the space of a very few days. Whereas, when it comes on gradually, the febrile symptoms subside or entirely absent, the torporous and træstious not very distressing, it sometimes continues a considerable length of time.

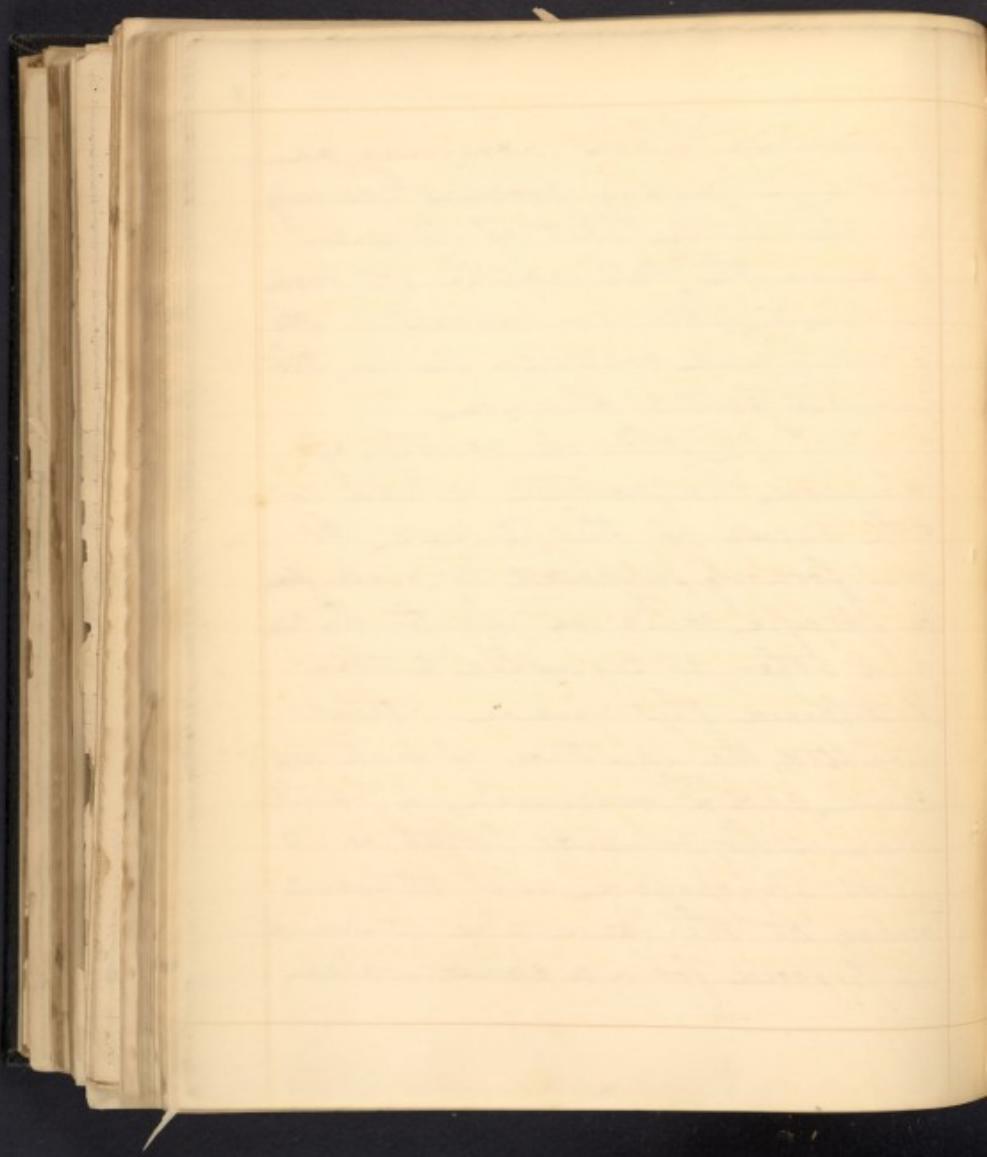
Causes.

Phthisis, usually prevails as an epidemic, and is but rarely sporadic. It is more frequently to be met with in warm climates than in those which are cold or temperate, and is very incidental to animals when located in situations favourable for its production. It is more common in the country than in cities, and



prevails in places bordering on
low and marshy grounds, generally
in the latter part of summer
and in the fall months. It occa-
-sionally however appears in the
spring and continues during the
greater part of summer.

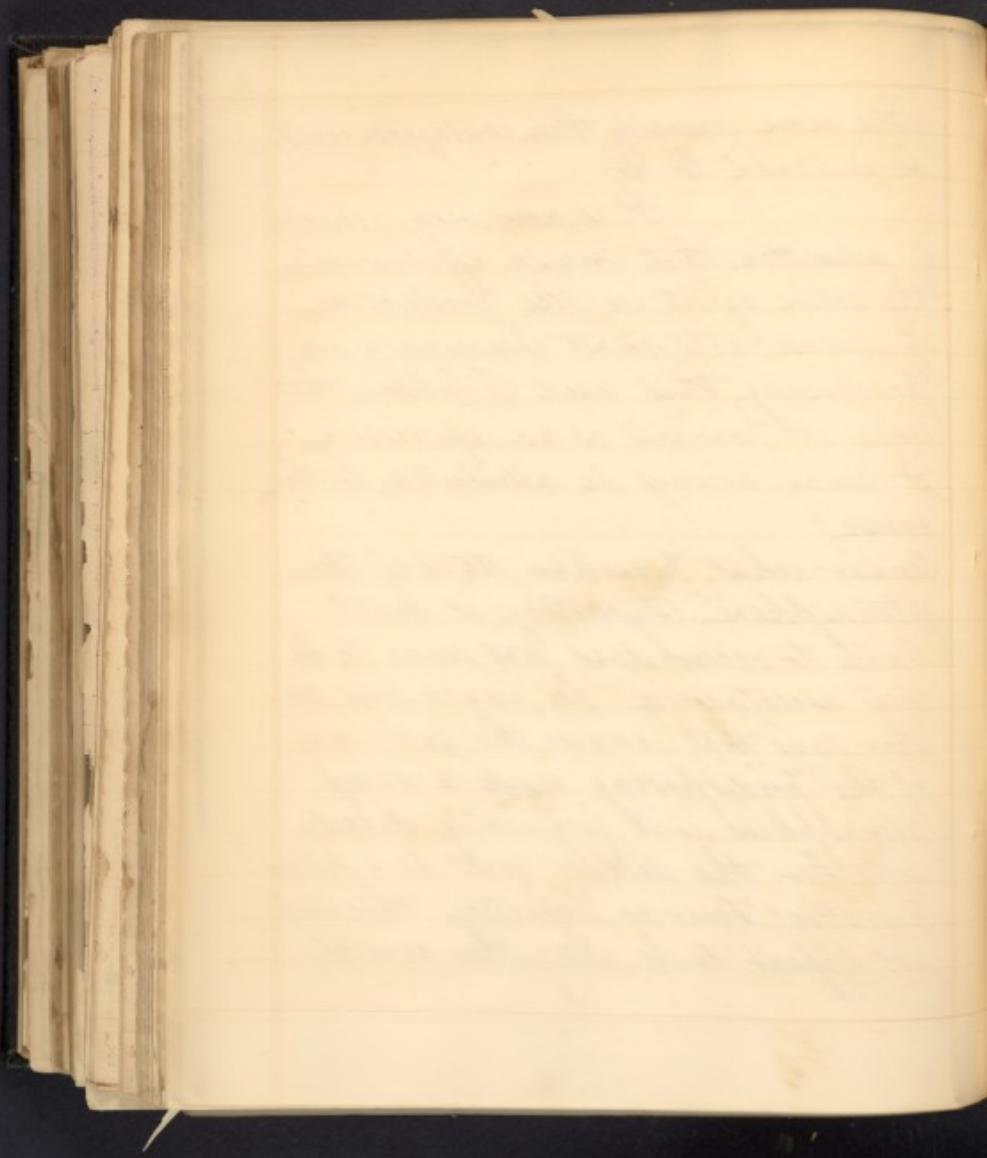
Much variety of
opinion has existed relative to
the cause of this Disease. It
was formerly supposed to arise from
a specific contagion. Doctor Ballou
and other distinguished authors
entertained this opinion. Others
doubted the existence of such a
cause, and Zimmerman, in partic-
ular, who remarks, "that on its
first appearance, as it attacked
men at the same time it seemed
to proceed from a cause which



acted more generally than contagion could be supposed to do."

It is now very generally admitted, that "Marsh effluvia" the active agent in the production of disease, acts most commonly in producing this, and I believe that when it prevails as an epidemic it may always be attributed to this cause.

Under what peculiar states of the atmosphere Dysentery is most liable to occur does not seem to be well ascertained. An ingenious author says "that under the influence of the predisposing cause, a damp atmosphere will frequently decide whether the disease will be a bilious Remittent Fever or Dysentery." This does not appear to be altogether correct.



The disease has prevailed frequently under an opposite condition of the atmosphere; and it is said by some most commonly to occur after a continuance of very warm, and at the same time dry states of the weather.

So various indeed have been the states of the atmosphere during the prevalence of this disease, at different times, that we are not able to mark with precision those which favour most its production.

Some other causes have been assigned by authors as sufficient to produce Syphilis. The principal of these are, cold and certain kinds of aliment.

It does not appear that a diminished temperature will alone, and independent of other causes produce this disease. In a system where a predis-

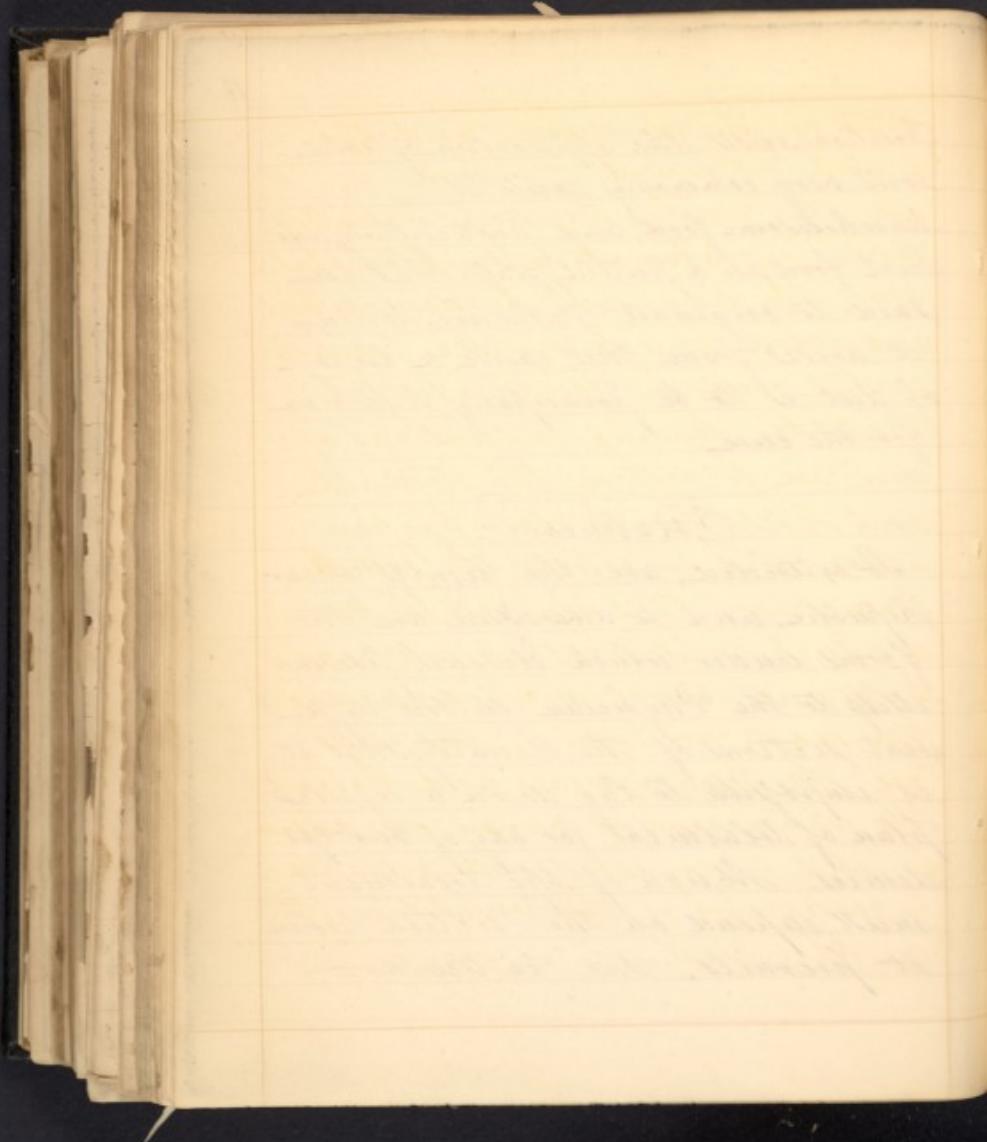


position exists the application of cold
will very commonly excite it.

Mischievous food, and particularly ani-
mal food in a putrid state, has been
said to originate Dyspepsy. When
it arises from that cause a change
of diet is to be principally relied on
for the cure.

Treatment

So extended are the limits of our
Republic, and so diversified are the
forms under which disease presents
itself to the Physician in the differ-
ent sections of the Country, that it
is impossible to lay down a regular
plan of treatment for any of our epi-
demies. Much of the treatment
must depend on the section where
it prevails. The particular

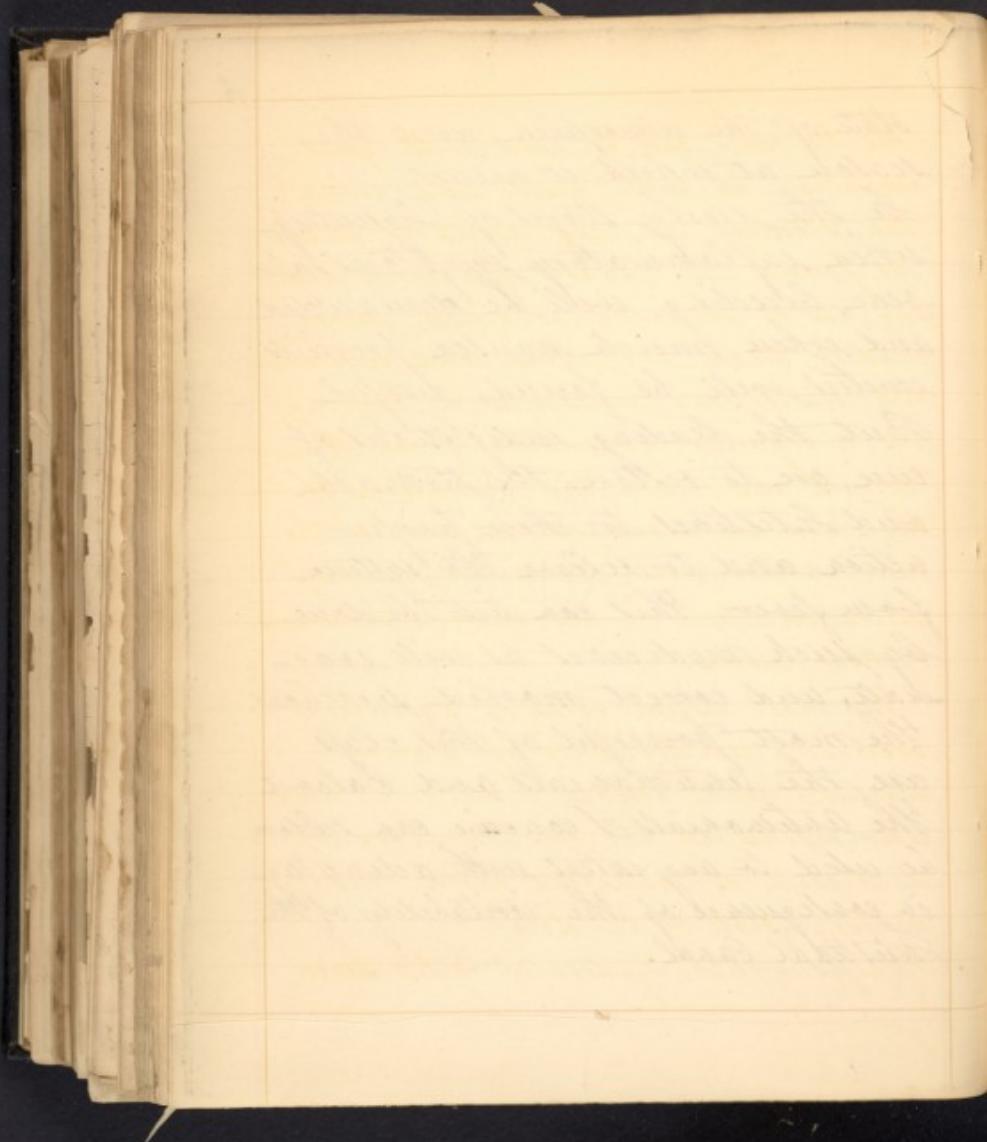


State of the atmosphere, and the season at which it occurs.

In the early stages of Dysentery, when inflammatory symptoms prevail, bleeding will be demanded and when much nausea prevails emetics will be found useful.

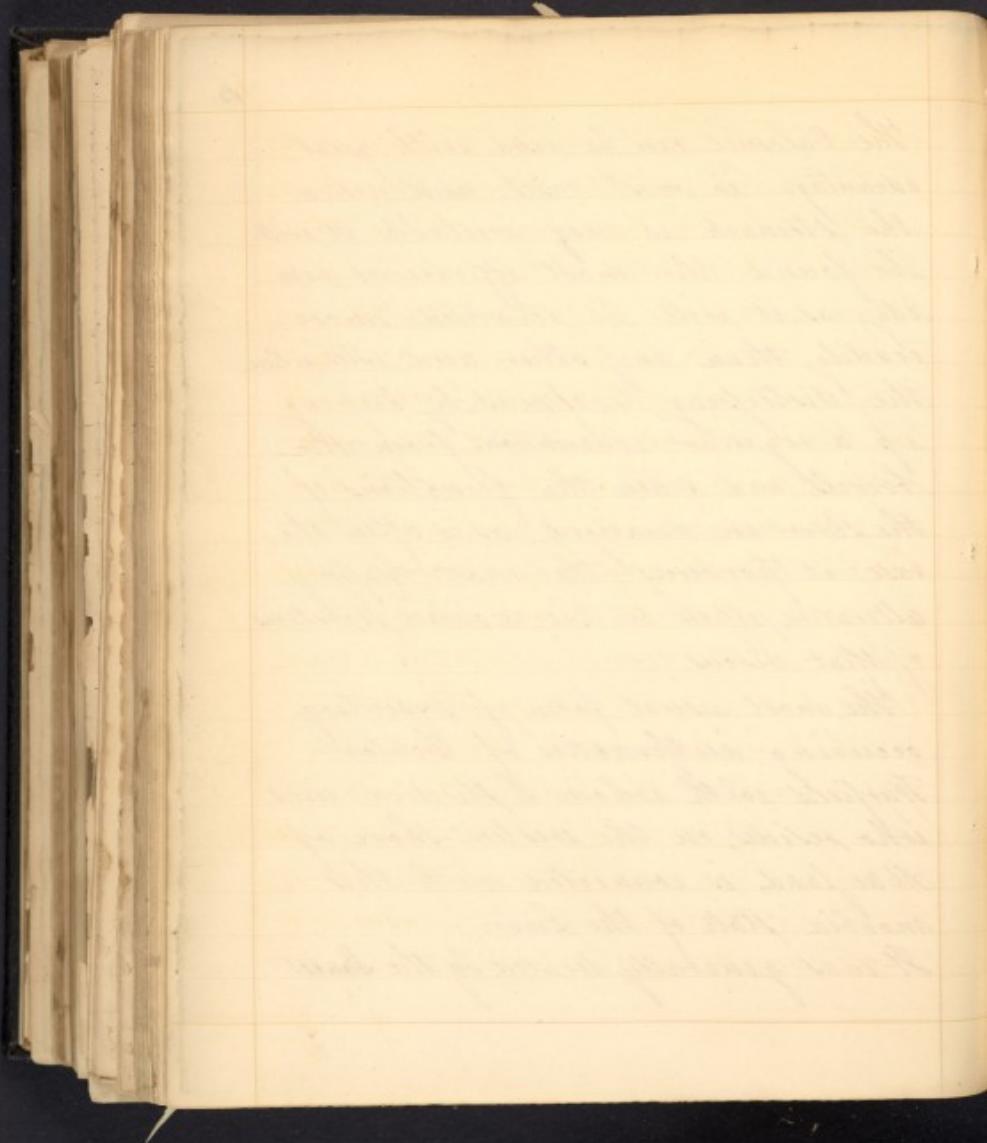
But the leading indications of cure, are to restore the Stomach and Intestines to their proper action, and to relieve the system from fever. This can best be done by such medicines as will evacuate, and correct morbid secretions.

The most powerful of this class are the Antimonials and Calomel. The Antimonials I conceive can seldom be used to any effect with advantage in consequence of the irritability of the Intestinal Canal.

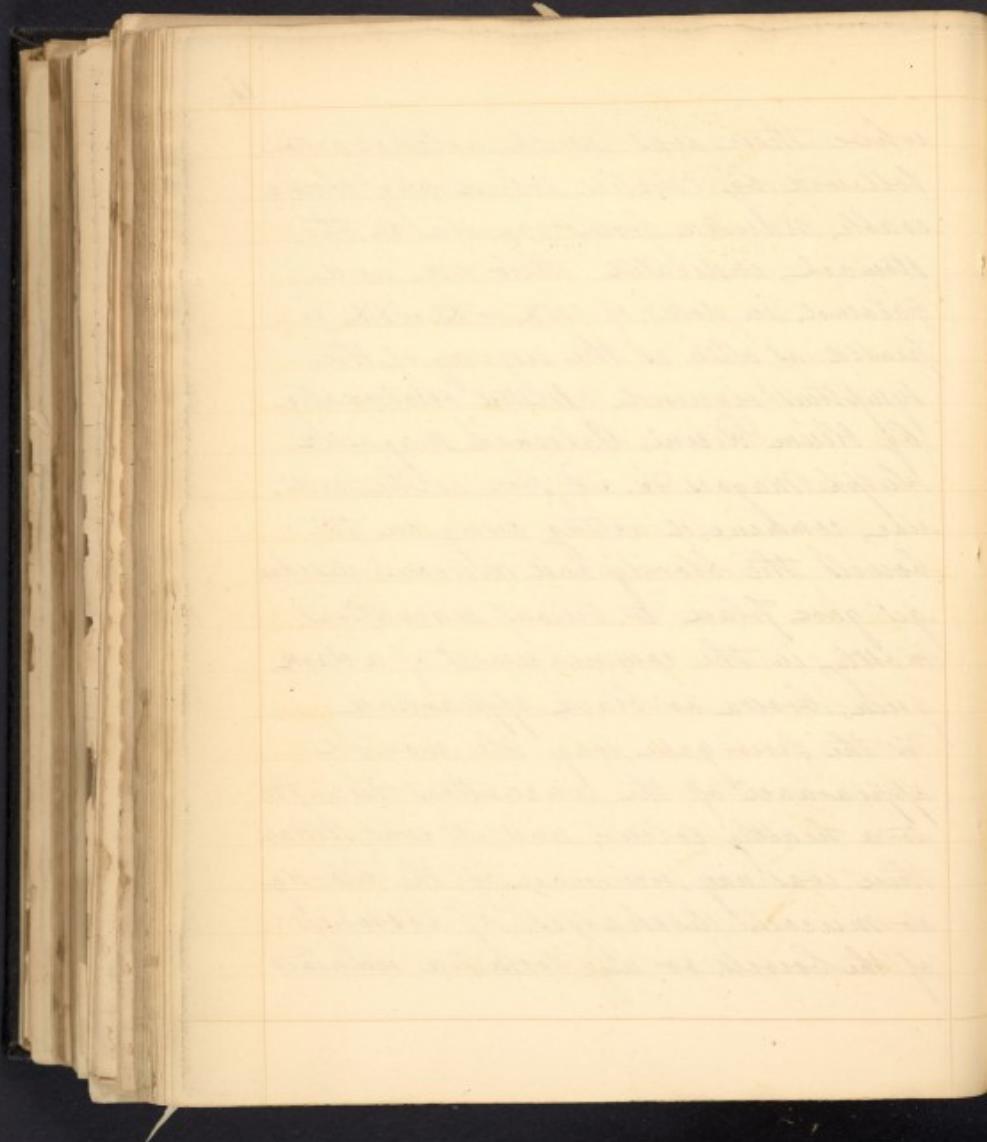


The Calomel can be used with great advantage in most cases, and when the Stomach is very irritable it will be found the most efficacious remedy, as it will be retained more readily than any other, and will relieve the distressing tenesmus by keeping up a regular evacuation from the Bowels, and when the functions of the Liver are deranged (as is often the case) it produces the most happy alterative effects on the morbid sections of that viscus.

The most usual form of Dysentery occurring in practice of Doctor Warfield with whom I studied, and who resides on the western-shore of Maryland, is connected with this morbid state of the Liver.
It was generally treated by the laudanum



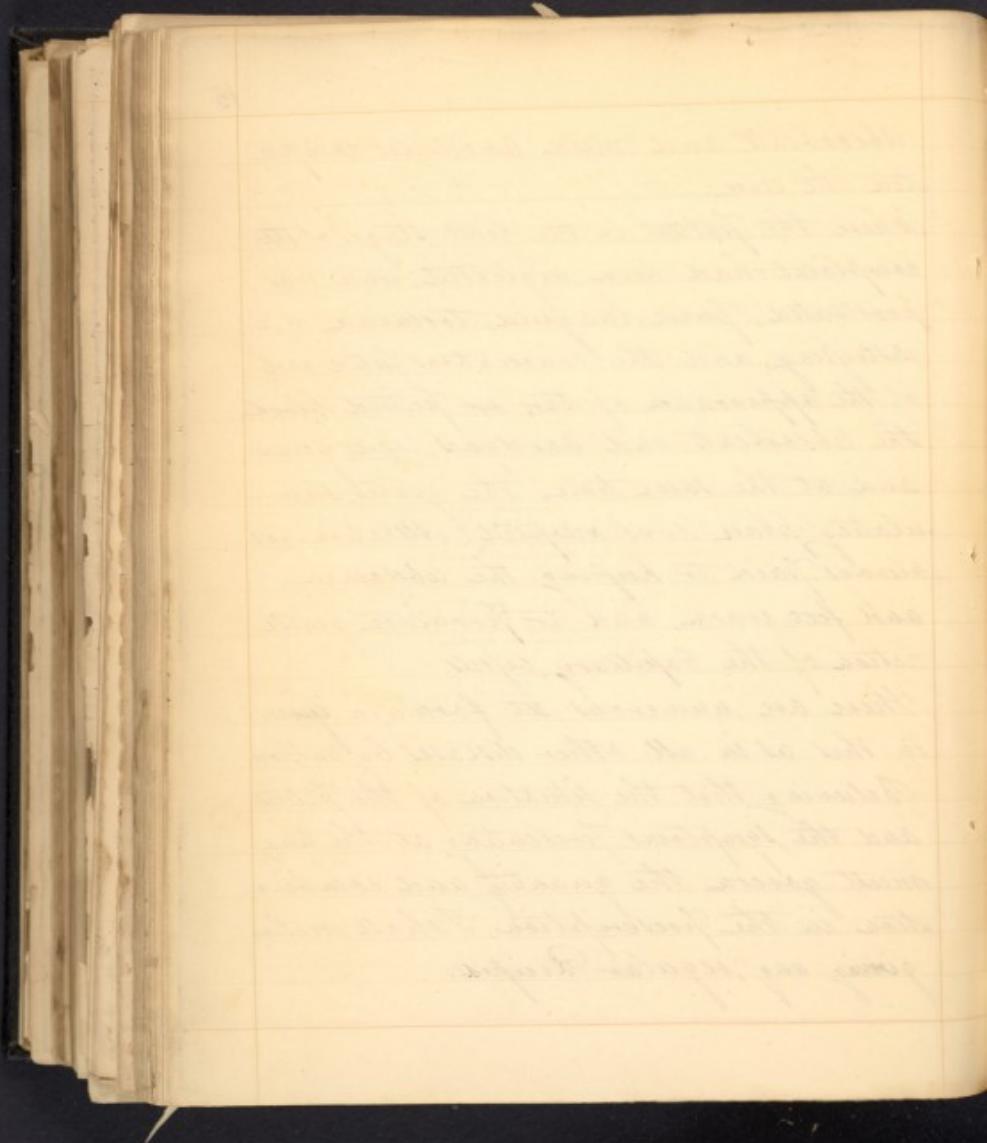
where there was much arterial action,
followed by cuncties, when any considerable indusca from ingesta on the
stomach indicated their use; and
Calomel, in doses of ~~xx~~. or ~~xx~~ or ~~xx~~, re-
peated as often as the urgency of the
symptoms required, assisted occasionally
by Gum Ricini. Calcined Magnesia
Sulph. Magac. &c. So soon as the medi-
cine commenced acting freely on the
bowels the bloody and mucous dischar-
ges gave place to bilious evacuations;
mostly in the commencement of a dark
green, green or black appearance.
If the fever gave way the marbled
appearance of the evacuation changed
to a healthy colour, and it was seldom
there was any recurrence of the bloody
or mucous discharges. If constancy
of the bowel, or any torbia remained



absorbents, and mild anodynes completed the cure.

Where the patient in the first stages of the complaint had been neglected, and was prostrated, pale, languid, torpid, ~~and~~ destroying, and the vaera too fatigued, and at the appearance of tar, or putrid blood the absorbents and anodynes were given and at the same time the gentle, stimulating plan, was adopted. Attention was always paid to keeping the abdomen and feet warm, and to promote gentle action of the capillary vessels.

There are numerous set formulae given in this as in all other diseases by authors. Believing that the situation of the patient and the symptoms presenting at the time must govern the quantity and combination in the prescription, I shall decline giving any regular Recipes.



Besides those remedies already mentioned,
I will add, that the Acetas Plumbi, and
Gum Arabic, combined with Opium,
the Specaciuaria with Opium or Salo-
mel, and the mucilaginous substances,
are all useful in the different stages
of the disease. I have frequently seen
in Dr. W's practice the oil of Butter
used with the most happy and
soothing effects.

- Finis -

